New York Tribune

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New York Tribune
First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements
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Befogging the Rail Act

Much confusion and mischief are caused by the loose use of words. Thus Mr. Gompers is led astray and leads others astray by an inexact use of the word "strike" in this statement which he made the other day: "The assertion that the Esch-Cummins transportation act can prevent strikes has been demonstrated to be an absolute fallacy."

It is open to any one who has studied the Esch-Cummins act to say that it does furnish a means for preventing strikes and that the resistance of the railroad unions to the wage decision of the Railroad Labor Board does not constitute a strike. Strikes occur when employers and employees disagree as to wages and working conditions, and, in the absence of any settlement, work is suspended by the employees as a measure of peaceful coercion. These conditions do not exist in the case of the unions which are fighting the recent awards of the Railroad Labor Board.

The unions and the railroad managements disagreed as to wages. The Esch-Cummins act provided that either party might take the dispute before the Labor Board, thus transferring responsibility for a settlement to a government agency. The government agency made its award. The controversy was taken out of the hands of both employers and employees. The refusal of the latter to accept the board's judgment, followed by their retirement from the service of the carriers, is not a strike in the proper sense. It is a walk-out.

Senator Cummins is of the opinion that the rulings of the board are binding, both on the carriers and on the workers. He himself tried to make the act of 1920 stronger, putting sharper teeth into the provisions doing away with strikes. But he rightly contends that the law did do away with the possibility of strikes in any case in which a request was made to the Labor Board for adjudication. The only thing left to employees disregarding an award was a walk-out. The only thing left to employers disregarding an award was a lock-out. And he maintains that there is sufficient authority in the law as it stands for government procedure against either a walk-out or a lock-out.

Many persons have been bewildered by the claim that the unions are engaged in a controversy with the railroads. They are not. They have left the railroad service and are trying, as organizations outside the scope of the Esch-Cummins act, to coerce the railroads into joining them in an effort to upset the decision of a Federal agency. As outsiders they are mere obstructionists of Federal regulation of interstate transportation. The main question which the government has to solve is to put an end to such illegitimate obstruction.

A Cause Worth Helping

Whatever is the pay of members of the Fire Department the city can never adequately compensate those who are permanently injured while saving life and property or provide for those they leave behind if they are killed.

The maximum pension at retirement is $500 a year, the minimum $300. This does not go far toward the support of a veteran fireman or that of his dependents.

To care for firemen who have been injured and to keep their families from want is the work of the honor emergency fund committee of the New York Fire Department.

This fund, which was founded two years ago, following a fatal fire in a Brooklyn gas plant, defrays the expenses of operations, provides for special care and nursing, buys surgical appliances, artificial limbs, etc., and helps in the convalescence of the sick and injured.

To aid the fund the baseball team of the Chicago Fire Department will play three games of ball at Ebbets Field, in Brooklyn, July 20, 21 and 22. The admission to any game will be $1.

The cause is so appealing that any New Yorker ought to go to all three games if he can and send his friends if he hasn't the time to go.

The Hague Fiasco

Events at Genoa made inevitable the failure of its postscript, the Hague conference. The Hague conference, in reality, was dead before it was born.

Of what use is it to hold economic conferences when one of the most important parties refuses to recognize the plain laws of economics? Why discuss financial aid to a government that boasts that it is not bound to pay debts? Why talk of revival of industry with a system that gives private interests no room to function?

Neither at The Hague nor at Genoa was the real problem squarely faced—namely, that Bolshevism must be ended before Russian reconstruction can begin. At both the Russians sought to make war rather than peace.

Sooner or later Europe will doubtless hold a real economic conference. It will consider production and transportation and stabilization of currencies. When the time comes for such a conference America will look upon it with more sympathy than upon the two fiascos. The wisdom of the Administration's decision to keep out of both meetings no one now questions.

Why ?

Miss Elizabeth H. McNally has been unanimously recommended by the Board of Superintendents for the position of director of speech improvement in the public schools. Her qualifications for this work are unquestioned. She has had wide experience in it and much success.

Yet action on her appointment, recommended last January, has been nine times postponed by the Board of Education. It was postponed at the last meeting after it had become the first order of business. No reason for this attitude has been given by any member of the board. One of them, it is true, made a personal attack on Miss McNally at one of the meetings, but he afterward retracted all that he had said.

It is significant that an applicant for the same position, which pays $4,400 a year, is Miss Agnes Birmingham, a relative of Mayor Hylan. Miss Birmingham has not been recommended by the Board of Superintendents or by any of them. Whatever her qualifications may be, the men and women who are most familiar with the teaching staff persist in favoring Miss McNally.

Mr. Hylan frequently insists that he is keeping the schools free from politics, despite his frantic telephonic orders to "get Meleney" when he was wintering at Palm Beach. But perhaps his appointees of the School Board think that his relatives are not politicians and that nepotism is not politics.

Direct Relations With Canada

The visit of Premier Mackenzie King of Canada to the United States may well mark an important milestone in America's foreign relations. He came primarily to discuss the agreement regarding the unfortified border between the two countries. He spoke of the importance of this frontier in the international relations of the world. But he said nothing about the fact that this agreement, negotiated direct between London and Washington, was now being discussed direct between Canada and the United States.

In the old days—and as a matter of fact until two years ago—London determined the foreign relations of the British Empire. Since 1920, however, Canada has had the right, so far unused, of naming its own representative in Washington, with the rank of Minister, empowered to deal with all questions arising in the relations of Canada and the United States.

Whether or not Mr. Mackenzie King intends to avail himself of this right and appoint a Canadian Minister, his visit to Washington is the first important step in direct diplomatic relations between the two countries. If a new treaty is made with Canada to supplement the Rush-Bagot agreement, it will be the first fruit of these new relations.

The keen understanding of American and Canadian problems shown by the present British Ambassador, Sir Auckland Geddes, is doubtless the reason why Canada has not yet appointed a Minister to the United States. But the authorization of such an appointment, marking a great and almost revolutionary departure in Britain's methods of conducting her foreign relations, is a recognition by Great Britain that there are many questions concerning the United States and Canada which can best be solved by direct Canadian representation in Washington. Such questions as the St. Lawrence Canal, fishing rights, railway intercommunication and even Panama Canal tolls have a special significance for Canada and are not, properly speaking, questions of empire. Such, also, is the present proposal to revise the unarmed border agreement.

It will be interesting to see whether the Canadian Premier will follow up his visit and discussions by establishing permanent direct diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Bolting Meals

Brooklynites resent the charge that "business men" dawdle over lunch. Always quick to rush to the defense of the borough, "The Brooklyn Eagle" has sent an enterprising reporter to interview restaurateurs and club stewards, all of whom regretfully deny that the charge is true. The contrary is the case, runs the verdict, and Brooklyn business men and women eat all too fast.

What is true of Brooklyn is also true of Manhattan. The American business man has made some progress toward placidity of eating, but he has not yet overcome the habit of bolting what he eats, as if he had to catch a train. He may sit at the table for nearly an hour, but much of that time will be occupied in hectic discussion of prices or projects, and when his food is set before him he will shovel it into his mouth as fast as possible in order to be able to talk unhampered.

This is in part a relic of the lunch-counter days. Not in itself conducive to rumination, the lunch counter has a constant incitement to hurry in the shape of the man behind the stool. At every lunch hour in a crowded section for every one eating there will be two counting his bites and silently cursing him for being so slow. Even a hardened soul is responsive to this suggestion of haste and soon develops a guilty conscience if he fails to eat a sandwich in two bites and swallow a cup of coffee at one gulp.

In France they say that eating is an index of civilization. We here have been too prone to consider it a routine evil. But whether or not our eating index number is far below that of France, we certainly err on the side of hastiness. If only the charge that we dawdled too much were true there would undoubtedly be fewer dyspeptics and more placidity. Who eats in haste repents at leisure.

"The Queen of Battles"

Commenting on the Marine Corps maneuvers at Gettysburg, The Tribune said the other day that they showed conclusively that the infantry is still the Queen of Battles. For a time the deadlock of trench warfare seemed to throw doubt on the supreme rôle of infantry. On the European Western front vast armies were immobilized for three years, waiting for new weapons with which to break through rigid defenses. The multiplication of heavy guns and the advent of the tank furnished these weapons, and after Cambrai the war of movement, in which infantry dominates, was revived.

The War Department has been making studies of the influence of modern inventions on the technique of warfare, and, according to "The Army Recruiting News," has come to the conclusion that the foot soldier is now, as in all ages, the indispensable factor in battle. The military analysts agree that a man fights with the greatest freedom of action and the greatest efficiency when on foot, not on horseback, in a tank, in an airplane or in a fixed fortification. They agree that he is rendered least vulnerable when he is simply clothed against the weather, but wears a steel helmet.

The old thesis of the superiority of the fighting infantryman is thus restated: "Battle is normally determined by physical encounter with the bayonet or the fear thereof; all other agencies of destruction, as artillery, machine guns and aircraft, are auxiliary in their effect, however potent, and serve to make possible the advance of the foot soldier to hand-to-hand encounter."

The War Department is seeking to combat the heresy "that any material means can ever replace in war the individual soldier who is willing and able to fight." It ought to have little trouble in disposing of that heresy. The great war was won not by new inventions—by heavy artillery, mine throwers, improved machine guns, tanks and airplanes, though all these were of importance—but by the valor of the foot soldiers. It was, as Foch says, a contest of wills, a moral struggle, and victory went to the side which was determined to hold out the longer.

This is the teaching of the greatest masters of war. It is well to have it emphasized at a time when many are tempted to believe that future wars will be won merely by mechanical terrorism or dexterity.

MIRAGE, REFLECTION OR JUST AN HALLUCINATION?

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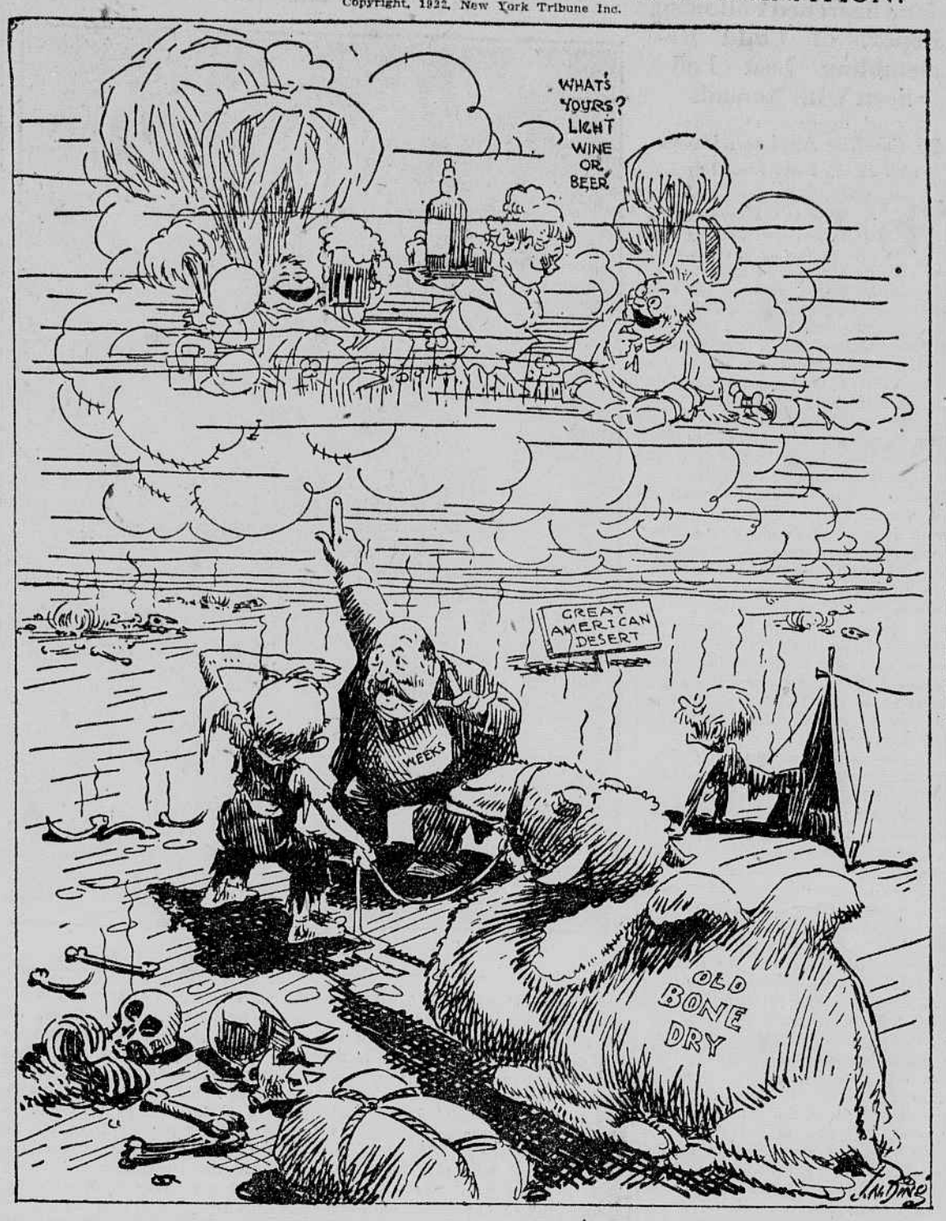

Early Apples From Old Orchards—By Arthur C. Staples

City folks do not hear the song that the knives of the mowing machine are singing to-day far down the field, as I sit here in my wheelchair spinning my dreams. They hear what O. Henry called the "Voice of the City," indefinable even by him, hungry and remote, baffling and indeterminate. This voice of the mower is as clear as a war cry, as definite as the song of the chantey-man, going out of our rivers past the headlands, into mystery.

There is "snake-spit" on the grass this morning and all the clouds are swinging down out of the north, racing like coasting craft out of harbors, the forefoot of each old lugger beating the ultramarine into snow. My roads are dusty and free from automobilists, for this is not a "state road," and a little beyond is a four corners with a sagging guidepost, pointing confusedly in several directions. Already I am thinking of the early Sopseyvines and the red Astrachans; and the thing I see is a small boy, standing in the door of an old farmhouse, very early in the morning. That boy may be you, or it may be I, according as this suggestion brings back to you, dear reader, any memories.

The Morning Dew

It is the beginning of the day of the orchard fruitage—this memory that I have in mind. Down the hill, past the pigpen, through the shed, toward the brook, with the low-hanging elm trees over its winding course, the fields where the mower runs his noisy scythes stretch away with apple trees among them, cannily placed near the neighbor's fence so that there may be so much more land for hay. Here are old trees, and each of them you know by its fruits. Each bird's nest is your's; each cuckoo that calls from the branches has been the vain pursuit of your slingshot.

It was first come, first served in your family in those days. The early boy got the apples. You, oh boy, are early! The others are in their beds in the attic, their stubbed toes sticking out from under the bed sheets and their frowsy heads on the pillows. There is a repugnance to the trip across the fields. If you remember anything of this sort you remember this above all else. The stubble is prickly to bare feet; the spiders' webs are ominous; the way is far; the cold dews on a boy's feet make him shiver; there are rumors of snakes in the grass. But over beyond are the Sopseyvines, fallen as they have a way of falling in the early summer nights.

Sounds and Fragrance

You do recall, do you not, the piercing of the stubble to bare feet, the cool dark shed, the fragrance of the pigpen, the grunting of the pigs as you pass by? You can smell the caraway and the dark herbs, burdock, yellow dock and others as you brush them aside by the swinging door. Do you get the breeze that lifts the hair about your brows, the song of the birds, the flecks of smoke from early kitchen fires, the silver of that winding brook that comes down under the dewy elms?

You know each tree! Here is one that never had a name, an early tree that had apples like unto no others. Here is the Sopseyvine—red, streaked with ivory shadings, somewhat elongated in shape, covered with dew, cold as ice, half hidden in the matted grass under the old stone wall. Sops o' wine indeed. Such apples as no one now knows; no one will ever know again, as did you and I. You sink your teeth in one of them, even though you were hardly out of bed and had really not started an appetite as yet. The juices crinkle about your tongue, run out of the corners of your mouth! The sweetness, the tartness, the flavor of grapes and strawberries and of other things that you had never tasted—all these filtered through your system. Oh, for another apple like that to-day!

Apples of the Past

I will leave you there, old timer, under the apple tree, filling your pockets and even the flap of your shirt with apples. I will leave you there amid the crowding wonders of that ineffable dawn! I would come over to this "other you" that sits in an office far away from that boy. I would sit by you and put my hand on your shoulder and say, "Never mind! It can't be helped. The Sopseyvines are gone! There are no early morning boys. No apples are dropping nowadays of August nights into cool, long dewy grasses! You and I and the Sopseyvines were the last of the race! To-day's apples are synthetic, robbed of juices, unwashed by dews." I will say this, although I know it is not true. But I will say it because, maybe we shall both feel better for saying it.

Hail to the Sopseyvines!

For the world could not spare the Sopseyvine. It yet lives somewhere and falls o' nights. We have now been denied the boy, the cloud, the winding brook, the bluebird on the fence rail. They yet endure! But let us not be separated from them altogether by the artificialities of life. Let us not permit business and Broadway to keep us from seeking dawns. Let us not forget that opportunity passes and time is brief, and the boy that is under the early apple tree may not wait for us forever. He may go beyond recall, some day. Let us hurry. The summer passes, the apples fall, the cloud darkens. The bluebird finishes her song and the winding brook merges with the infinite seas. Come, oldtimer! The boy waits. Let's go and find some Sopseyvines!

What Readers Say

The Common Law

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Of common law a decision, famous in American Constitutional jurisprudence, holds: "The adoption of the Constitution and the consequent creation of a national government did not abrogate this common law, that the division of governmental powers and duties between the national and state governments provided for in the Constitution did not deprive the people who formed the Constitution of the benefits of the common law; that as to such matters as were by the Constitution committed to the control of the national government there were applicable thereto the law of nations, the maritime law, the principles of equity and the common law." (62 Fed., 24, 41.)

For several decades the American people have, through their courts and legislatures, been endeavoring to break the grasp of monopolies, be it of money and commodities, of transportation and public utilities, or of labor itself. Despite endless litigation, anti-trust legislation and ever-widening administrative regulation by commission or arbitration boards the crisis, more acute each day, grows nearer, demanding sociological reform and economic readjustment, the problem remains unsolved and the unrest is more general.

It must be seen that the remedy is not through appeal to our feebly representative political authority, but to the fundamental "law of the land," the "common law" under the Constitution, ever hostile to monopoly, securing to labor the individual and inalienable natural rights of man and the general welfare of the public. It must be applied not only by our courts, but by administrative and executive authorities, upon which it is no less obligatory. Legislation designed to preclude restraint of interstate commerce, despite its interpretation in the light of the rule of reason, never has and never will cleave to the root of the trouble, but the great principles of the common law, "Proprio vigore," under the Constitution must serve to free the American people from the menace of monopolies. The strength of Rome in her early days was the simplified public and private law, civil and prætorian; her weakness in the last days of the empire the vast codification of "lex scripta" and imperial rescripts. The strength of American institutions in the beginning was the firm attachment to the common law freed of monarchical principles. The weakness of to-day lies in the vast complexity of jurisdictional power and immeasurable compilations of statutory enactment in derogation of the common law, and, subject to the rule of strict construction, people and state are equally responsible under the Constitution to the obligation of the common law. This fact must be understood: that in the United States there is a natural law, by the inspired establishments of the framers of the Constitution, which neither the government, the individual nor any corporate or associated body may transgress. JOSEPH W. STINSON.

New York, July 14, 1922.

Poor Germany!

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Your editorial of to-day "Germany Can Pay" should be broadcast, as was remarked to me by a keen observer. Is it Bolshevik or German money which has so undermined some of our leading papers that France is constantly referred to as an obstinate, unreasonable nation, seeking the life blood of Germany?

The propaganda is persistent and widespread. Many people are deceived by it and pity Germany. They do not seem to see that whatever burden they take from Germany they pile on the shoulders of France. Three of the four daily papers I read practically side with Germany against France.

Is it by this means that Germany is finally to gain her purpose? With a population advantage of five to three, with a per capita tax of $10 to France's $45, with unimpaired resources sufficient, even according to her friend Keynes, to pay the reparations agreed upon at Versailles, Germany is constantly whimpering and whimpering. It is only another way of fighting France. CHARLES S. HARTWELL.

Pomona, N. Y., July 12, 1922.

Canceling War Debts

The Allies Paid Us in Full Holding the Hun Till We Came In

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Before the French agents arrive we should try to be reasonable regarding the debt of his government to ours. It is absurd to want to be paid and yet not in the only way we can be paid, if indeed there is any way. France got no gold from us and has none to give back. She got money's worth in goods, and if it were not for our tariff wall she might be able to sell some goods here and let us take the proceeds, but this would not suit us at all. Everybody here wants to see American goods go to France, at least to the extent that French goods come here. No French goods, not even wines, are wanted here merely to settle old debts. Mais, que voulez vos?

Unreasonable, too, or worse, is our failure to appreciate what France did and suffered while we were making money out of the war. We did not stay out of the war so long for the purpose of making money. Circumstances controlled the situation. It takes a long time for a great nation like ours to resolve upon war. Our peaceful attitude, however, gave us the opportunity to accumulate most of the loose gold in the world to pay off our debts, and to become the only great creditor nation on this planet. In 1914 France and Belgium were the outposts of our civilization. Germany intended to dominate the world. England felt that the blow was intended for her as well, but we took years to see that the war was really our war, although 3,000 miles away.

Our soldiers and sailors saved the world from military domination, but our people must save it again, this time in the industrial, commercial and financial sense. From 1914 to 1917 was much too long to allow western Europe to struggle alone against the German hordes. From 1918 to 1922 is much too long for us to sit tight on our money bags, while our friends suffer from industrial stagnation.

The world needs a fair chance to make a fresh start. First, there should be some canceling of war debts. No better beginning could be made than our own wiping out of what France and Belgium owe us. These countries borrowed money to spend here, paying our citizens a war-time profit. The goods that were shipped were destroyed in fighting against our enemies, for it must be remembered that our government began to help only after we had declared war. We ought never to have considered our loans as ordinary loans. They should have been contributions in a common cause, for although we were in the war we were not ready to fight. It took us about a year to prepare. Three years elapsed between the sinking of the Lusitania, May, 1915, and the placing of American armies in the battle area.

If we had promptly declared war after the Lusitania outrage our losses might have been no greater than they actually were, and certainly the war would soon have been ended. Our friends would have saved millions of lives and billions of treasure, and would not have been obliged to borrow money of us. Our canceling of war debts is right policy now, either from the moral or the economic standpoint. The debts of western Europe are real only as long as we fail to appreciate the value to us of the holding of the enemy in check with sacrifices of blood until we could come to the rescue. If our friends had failed we might even now be still trying to resist a victorious Germany. Our canceling of war debts should be considered as the giving of compensation for services rendered.

J. HOWARD COWPERTHWAIT.

New York, July 10, 1922.

Scenery and Recreation

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In to-day's Tribune Mr. John B. Deane says that "there is a better use to which a park can be put (than that of scenery), and that is recreation."

This is a confusion of ideas, for the scenery and the recreation are inseparable. People go to the park for recreation because the scenery is there. If it were not, they wouldn't go. One cannot say that the recreation is more important than the scenery, because without the scenery there would be no recreation. There are many square miles of vacant lots in greater New York where people might "wander at will," but they don't. Sooner or later some of them will be made into parks, and as soon as they are people will frequent them—because of their scenery.

There are certainly many buildings that look well in parks, for trees and grass are usually the best setting for a fine building. But a park is a park, not a mere setting for buildings, and the more buildings there are the more it loses its park character. The popular idea of a park, and it is the true one, is a place where one can get away from streets and buildings a while and be reminded, at least to some extent, of the country.

HAROLD A. CAPARN.

New York, July 13, 1922.

A Week of Verse

Purple Grackles

(From The Bookman)

THE grackles have come.
The smoothness of the morning is puckered with their incessant chatter.
A sociable lot, these purple grackles,
Thousands of them strung across a long run of wind,
Thousands of them beating the air-ways with quick wing-jerks,
Spinning down the currents of the South.
Every year they come,
My garden is a place of solace and recreation, evidently,
For they always pass a day with me.
With high good nature they tell me what I do not want to hear.
The grackles have come.

* * * * *

Nonchalant highwaymen, pickpockets, second-story burglars,
Stealing away my little hope of summer.
There is no stealthy robbing in this.
Who ever heard such a gabble of thieves' talk?
It seems they delight in unmasking my poor pretense.
Yes, now I see that the hydrangea blooms are rusty;
That the hearts of the golden glow are ripening to lusterless seeds;
That the garden is dahlia-colored,
Flaming with its last over-hot hues;
That the sun is pale as a lemon too small to fill the picking-ring.
I did not see this yesterday,
But to-day the grackles have come.

They drop out of the trees
And strut in companies over the lawn,
Tired of flying, no doubt;
A grand parade to limber legs and give wings a rest.
I should build a great fish-pond for them,
Since it is evident that a bird-bath, meant to accommodate two goldfinches at most,
Is slight hospitality for these hordes.
Scarcely one can get in,
They all peck and scrabble so,
Crowding, pushing, chasing one another up the bank with spread wings.
"Are we ducks, you, owner of such inadequate comforts,
That you offer us lily-tanks where one must swim or drown,
Not stand and splash like a gentleman?"
I feel the reproach keenly, seeing them perch on the edges of the tanks, trying the depth with a chary foot,
And hardly able to get their wings under water in the bird-bath.
But there are resources I had not considered,
If I am bravely ruled out of count.
What is that thudding against the eaves just beyond my window?
What is that spray of water blowing past my face?
Two—three—grackles bathing in the gutter,
The gutter providentially choked with leaves.
I pray they think I put the leaves there on purpose;
I would be supposed thoughtful and welcoming
To all guests, even thieves.
But considering that they are going South and I am not,
I wish they would bathe more quietly,
It is unmannerly to flaunt one's good fortune.

They rate me of no consequence,
But they might reflect that it is my gutter.
I know their opinion of me,
Because one is drying himself on the window-sill
Not two feet from my hand.
His purple neck is sleek with water,
And the fellow preens his feathers for all the world as if I were a fountain statue.
If it were not for the window,
I am convinced he would light on my head.
Tyrian-feathered freebooter,
Appropriating my delightful gutter with so extravagant an ease,
You are as cool a pirate as ever scuttled a ship,
And are you not scuttling my summer with every peck of your sharp bill?

But there is a cloud over the beech-tree,
A quenching cloud for lemon-livered suns.
The grackles are all swinging in the tree-tops,
And the wind is coming up, mind you.
That boom and reach is no summer gale,
I know that wind,
It blows the Equinox over seeds and scatters them,
It rips petals from petals, and tears off half-turned leaves.
There is rain on the back of that wind.
Now I would keep the grackles,
I would plead with them not to leave me.
I grant their coming, but I would not have them go.
It is a milestone, this passing of grackles.
A day of them, and it is a year gone by.
There is magic in this, and terror,
But I only stare stupidly out of the window.
The grackles have come.

Come! Yes, they surely came.
But they have gone.
A moment ago the oak was full of them,
They are not there now.
Not a speck of a black wing,
Not an eye-peep of a purple head.
The grackles have gone,
And I watch an Autumn storm
Stripping the garden,
Shouting black rain challenges
To an old, limp summer
Laid down to die in the flower beds.

AMY LOWELL.